

ELEANORA;

OR A

Tragical but true CASE

OF

INCEST

IN

*GREAT-BRITAIN.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in  
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THE ANO R A

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Trigical but true CASE

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G R E A T - B R I T A I N .



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# P R E F A C E.

*I Remember (about the latter End of the last Century, in my Childhood) to have heard my Father several Times repeat, the most material Parts of the ensuing little History, which he used to say, that my Grandfather had told him, he was a Witness to the Truth of, from the Intimacy he had with all the Actors in it, save Arene, whom he had never seen; and if I am not mistaken, my Grandfather had informed him of the Family, and the Names of all the Parties; though he never used to relate it under other Characters, than the Mother, the Son, and the Daughter. He said, he had heard my Grandfather talk of printing the Account, as a Caution, against other Persons falling into the like Dilemma; though I don't remember, ever to have heard him mention the Manuscript of it.*

*Now that might have possibly lain till Doomsday unobserved, had my self and my Descendants behaved with the same Equality of Temper as my Father and Grandfather did; for*  
*their*

their Patrimony of three Hundred Pounds a Year, was transmitted from one to the other, and from my Father to me, without either Addition or Diminution; till my active Genius, in Pursuit of an Augmentation, having involved me in some Difficulties, which obliged me to raise a Sum of Money upon it; on Inspection of my little Deeds for that Purpose, I there fell upon this Manuscript of my Grandfather's, written by his own Hand.

I had a perfect Idea of the Story before, as to the most general Terms of it, but was much more agreeably affected, by my Grandfather's Manner of relating it, in the Manuscript wherein he has minutely exhibited not only the Words, and Actions, but the very Souls of the interested Parties.

I might have made some Alteration in the prefatory Part of the Narration, and have began the Story as from my self; but having advised with some Friends on that Head, have been persuaded to send it forth in his own Words, as he, I presume, intended to have published it, about the Year 1685, by a Date which appears on the Back of it.

Now that might have possibly lain till you had got your own Manuscript, but my self and my Dear Grandfather, with the same Humanity of Temper as my Father and Grandfather did; for their





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**T**HE following little History of the Transactions of a private Family, I should not have undertaken to offer to the Public, but from the Surprisingness of the Facts, and my Intimacy in the Family, by whom the most minute Passages were, in Confidence, entrusted to my Secrecy, from the very beginning, to the ensuing Catastrophe; of which, I was but too late a Spectator; as also, from a peculiar Inclination I have, that Mankind beholding the dreadful Consequences of Vice in others, may form the stronger Guards against any Submission

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sion to it in themselves: For the ensuing Narration will, to a Demonstration, prove, that no one can possibly limit the Process of an ill Act once commenced; and that the only Way to avoid bad Consequences is, to afford no Cause for them; for one Enormity, though ever so privately committed, fails not, for the most part, to draw after it such a Succession of Evils, as is very difficult to set Bounds to.

There are many Reasons moving me, for publishing this Account under fictitious Names; but no one weighs more with me, than that several of the Descendants of the Parties of whom I am about to treat, are now settled near to the Scene of Action, where the ensuing Tragedy was exhibited; who, from all that I could ever yet learn, are intirely ignorant of the impure Mixture they proceed from; nor could I forgive my self, should my Writings cause the least Disquiet in the Breasts of those Innocents, who have no ways merited that Anguish, which an Exposure of their Progenitors Failings must occasion them.

*Eugenio* was the younger Son of an illustrious Family in the northern Parts of *Scotland*; his own hereditary Patrimony was but small, but his Parents had furnished him with so polite an Education, and Nature had dispensed to him such superiour Endowments, and Peculiarity

arity of Address, as intitled him to the Appellation of one of the compleatest Gentlemen of the Age: He was initiated very early into the Army, where, at the Age of twenty-eight Years, he ranked as a Captain; and then it was, that upon a Visit to his elder Brother, in his own Country, he became deeply smitten with a very young Heiress, of superior Fortune and Estate to most in that Country; nor were his Addresses to her fruitless; for she must have been more than Woman, to have withstood a Man of his Qualifications.

He married her before his Return to his Regiment, and brought her up to Town with him, where they were the most remarkably happy Couple, esteemed by every body, that had ever entered into the Marriage State; but no Mortals have the Command of their own Felicity! He had but just Time to behold his Image in a Son she brought him, before he fell at the Siege of the Fort of *St. Martins* in the *Isle of Ree*, leaving his Lady in her twentieth Year.

Our young Widow *Eleanora*, (as I shall after call her) was long inconsolable for the Loss of so indulgent an Husband; but now her sole remaining Comfort in Life was centered in the Person of her dear and only Son *Orestes*; (for by that Name we must henceforth distinguish him) nor, though frequent advantageous



Proposals were made her, for matching into some of the noblest Houses in the North, was she ever to be prevailed with to relinquish her State of Widowhood; her Fondness for her lost *Eugenio*, and the Memory of his Love, overweighing every other Gratification whatsoever.

She omitted no Care or Advantage in *Orestes's* Education, till at the Age of sixteen, he having proceeded through the Forms of scholastick Exercise under a private Tutor, she sent him for Academick Learning to the University of *Glasgow*, (for she had retired again to her own Patrimony, immediately upon the Death of *Eugenio*) where she purposed he should remain, till he had perfected his Studies.

Towards the latter end of his first Year at the University, she sent for him home, at a Time of Vacation, when it was usual for the Pupils to relax with their Friends for a few Weeks; and they never having had so long a Separation before, the Interview between them was very affecting. His Mother, in his Absence, had received into her Family a Gentleman's Daughter as her Companion: She was one of the most amiable young Creatures in Being, of about nineteen Years of Age, and of a most excellent Temper and Behaviour.

*Orestes*

*Orestes* had not been many Days with his Mother, before the Temptation of this lovely Maiden had so bewitched him, that he became outrageous for the Possession of *Arene*, (for that was the young Lady's Name). He wanted not a Means for discovering his Passion to her, in all the softest Strains that Elocution could employ, to captivate the Heart of a tender Virgin like herself; nor durst she treat his Addresses with that Scorn they deserved, for Fear of disobliging her Lady; which he construing into an half Consent to his Inclinations, grew but the more pressing and solicitous.

He had daily made use of so many soft Arguments, without the least Effect, that impatient of longer Delay, as the Time for his Departure was very near at hand, he was determined to make the most of it, by obtaining that by Stratagem, which his Intreaties would not procure; and this he had, by several Methods, attempted; nor had she been less vigilant in counteracting each Particular, till the second Night before his Return, when she was in desperate Fear, lest she should have been surpris'd; for, as she that Night lay musing in Bed, the Room being very dark, she was startled by a gentle Rattling at her Door, as if somebody was hammering at her



Lock, to open it : She was certain that she had locked it over-night, and had taken the Key into her Pocket ; nor could she conceive what this Noise should mean, unless it was her young Master, who was making the Experiment of some other Key to gain Admittance by : What could she do ! alone in the Dark ! unable singly to resist his Force ! She was almost at her Wits End : However, as she had no Time to lose, if she meant to avoid him, she stole softly from her Bed, and crept under it, till she should be ascertained of the Issue of what she had heard.

She had not continued long in her Retreat, before the Steps of somebody walking upon the Floor, without their Shoes, were very distinguishable ; and presently she heard her Curtains drawn back very gently, when, by the Swag of her Bed, it was apparent, that some one was laid down on it. She trembled so now, and was under such Terror and Consternation, that she feared she must have cried out, whether she would or not ; but still stifled it as much as possible. Soon after, she felt the Person roll about, from Side to Side of the Bed ; and she could plainly distinguish *Orestes* his Voice, muttering somewhat very fast, but what, she could not distinguish ; and then stepping out of Bed, she could, by her Ear, trace him round  
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the Room, feeling in the Chimney, and in each Corner and Place wheresoever he could but imagine she might stand concealed; till having travelled the Chamber round to no Purpose, he softly locked the Door, and retired.

His Absence afforded her the Liberty of coming forth, when she immediately drest herself with all Dispatch; and having sat for some Time in her Chair, considering how best she might behave, to avoid a second Attempt, in case he should return; after perceiving all to be silent, she then laid herself upon the Bed; but closed not her Eye-lids till Morning, though she heard no more of him that Night.

The next Day, as she was at her Needlework, according to Custom, in her Lady's Room, before Noon; *Eleanora* taking Notice of an unusual Heaviness upon *Arene's* Brow, more than she had ever perceived before; and having observed her to sigh several Times; *Arene*, said she, are you not well? somewhat, I am satisfied, more than ordinary disturbs you, you are not accustomed to this Gravity: let me know, Child, said she, has any one behaved amiss to you? tell me the Truth.

*Arene* could now hold no longer, when (the Tears gushing forth) so soon as she could recover her Speech, she begged *Eleanora* to



pardon what she was now constrained to relate to her, for that truly she had revealed it sooner, but for the Dread she had, lest it should not only create her Anger to *Orestes*, but occasion her to turn herself out of the Family.

She then informed her, that she was so unhappy, as to prove too engaging in the Eyes of *Orestes*; that he had solicited her to his Embraces, almost ever since his Return from *Glasgow*; but not being able to prevail with her, he had also condescended to every unfair Practice that might further his Designs of debauching her; and that indeed she was even afraid to go to Bed of a Night, lest some unhappy Consequence should proceed from it; and then disclosed all that had happened but the preceding Evening: adding, that as the ensuing was the last Night he had to stay, she had resolved with herself to sit up; for she was well satisfied, that he would not then fail of exerting his utmost Efforts to obtain her.

*Eleanora* sat with great Attention, till *Arene* had concluded her Narration; she then commended her Modesty, and the Prudence of her Conduct to the Skies, and was just about venting her Passion in Invectives against *Orestes*; but stopping short; *Arene*, says she, as *Orestes* is but young yet, perhaps a Stratagem, which  
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is just come into my Head, may more effectually reclaim him, than downright discovering what you have disclosed to me; as possibly this may but irritate him against you; and by denying it, he may think to justify his own Innocence: Therefore, *Arene*, said she, give him the Opportunity of discoursing you to-day, look brisk upon him, and should he press you to consent, seem to comply with him; but refrain from making him any Promise. I myself will this Night take up with your Bed, whilst you lie secure in mine; I'll ring such a Peel in the amorous Spark's Ears, when I have him there, as shall deter him from any similar Attempt in any Family, I'll warrant you.

*Arene* promised to pursue *Eleanora's* Advice, and accordingly did so; which inspired our Lover with such a Flow of Spirits, that far from the sneaking Attack which he made the Night before, he now rushed impetuously into her Bed, *sans ceremonie*: O my *Arene*! said he, clasping his Mother in his Arms, you will now make me happy indeed. *Eleanora* (as she afterwards confessed) had now no further Power to exert her Passion against him, or to resist the Temptation, which the Time and Opportunity induced her to submit to; but under the Infatuation of an irresistible Destiny,

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acquiesced, O HORROUR! to his incestuous Enjoyment; from which Moment, her Mouth was for ever stopped from reproaching him.

*Orestes* arose before Day-light, and *Eleanora* soon after retired to her Chamber, where she informed *Arene* what a due Sense she had imprest upon her Son, of the Foulness of the Fact he had intended against her, and of what Protestations he had made of Amendment; But, continued she, that he may offer you no Affront for impeaching him to me, do you keep shut up in my Dressing-Room till he is gone; for I could as soon suffer him to insult my-self, as you, my Dear.

*Arene* was so thoroughly sensible of her Lady's Favour, that she returned her abundance of Thanks, and acted accordingly; nor could *Orestes* (upon the strictest Enquiry) gain the least Intelligence of her; till his Time being come, and some of his fellow Collegians, who were to accompany him to *Glasgow*, waiting for him, he took his Leave of his Mother, and pursued his Journey to the University.

Some Months after *Orestes* had been resettled at *Glasgow*, his Uncle invited him to his Seat; and informing him that he intended a Journey to *London*, offered to take *Orestes* with him, shew him that City, and introduce him into Company about the Court. *Orestes* acknowledged the

the Obligation, made instant Preparation to accompany him, and stayed there with his Uncle upwards of six Months.

*Eleanora*, in the Absence of her Son, perceiving Signs of her Pregnancy, was almost driven to the Height of Despair. She now began to reflect on the Act she had committed, with singular Horrour and Detestation; looking upon her Honour, which she had hitherto so scrupulously preserved, and upon account of which she had so much prided herself, to be no longer any other than an idle Name, which must be lost in Disgrace and Infamy, so soon as it should be known that she was with Child; and that, created such Remorse and Torture to her Imagination, already overborn with the Pressure of the unnatural Crime itself; that rather than submit to the Censure of public Raillery, she formed a Design of discharging herself from being publicly stigmatized by several Practices which might cause Abortion; but every one of them proving unsuccessful, she was necessitated still to retain the Testimony of her Iniquity, till a regular Flux of Time should release her from her growing Burthen in a natural Way; and now, Day treading on the Heels of Day, contracting the Compass of her Deliberations, some Cover for her Shame became absolutely necessary; for  
she



she was unable, by any Artifice, longer to conceal it.

It happened, that an old and faithful Servant, who had long lived in her Family, had not many Years before, been married to a Farmer, who was *Eleanora's* Tenant, of a little loanly Farm, about thirty Miles from her own Seat; and her Husband being lately dead, *Eleanora* projected a Journey over to the Widow, (as she gave out) to comfort her upon the Loss, and make a short Stay with her, that she might be the better Judge of her Ability to manage the Farm by herself; being in great Hopes of a private Delivery there; purposing, at all Events, to engage the good Widow to Secrecy: For which End, no sooner was she arrived at the Farm, than she dispatched away all her Servants and Equipage to her own Seat, till she should send them Orders to return to her; and then broke the Design of her Arrival to her Tenant.

She prefaced her Discourse with the Impossibility she now perceived there was, for the firmest Resolutions, and most exact Conduct, to be so strictly guarded as never to be subject to Error: Then enlarging upon the Frailty and Imbecillity of her own Sex in general, and how slight a Security Judgment, Education, virtuous Maxims, and even Reputation itself were

against such Slips, and Mifconducts, as human Nature itself too frequently prompted us to, at unwary Times, even to our eternal Confusion; she proceeded to acquaint the good Woman of her own unhappy Circumstances, assuring her, that so far from contributing the least Particle of her Will to the Transaction, she could only say, that it had happened, without being in the least able to account for it, why, or wherefore; for that her Inclinations had ever byassed her to direct contrary Practice, till Commission of this infelicitous Act, and had ever since continued so to do; but that since what was done, was now not to be retracted, she had placed her whole Confidence and Reputation in her Hands, that she would assist her in her Difficulty with such Secrecy and Fidelity, as the Case required.

The good Woman, who owed so much to *Eleanora*, could do no less than assure her, of her utmost Endeavours to serve her, and with the most hearty good Will, prepared the best Accommodations that were possibly to be made against the Labour; for as no Money was wanting, so consequently nothing else could; and, in due Time, she was delivered of a Daughter.

This was all transacted with such Privacy, by the several Means they had before concerted, that



that not even the Midwife, who was brought from a great Distance off, was ever suspicious of the Person she had under her Management ; so that *Eleanora* having succeeded to her Wish, and being about again, engaged the Farmer as Nurse to her Infant ; and riding one Day with her Tenant to a Town about twelve Miles from the Farm, from thence sent for her Equipage, and returned home, having first assured the Farmer, under her Hand, that she should hold the Farm Rent free for her Life, on proviso that she proved true to her Trust.

*Orestes*, during his Stay with his Uncle in *London*, was so delighted with the Way of Life of the Soldiery, that his Uncle, by his Interest, procured him a Pair of Colours in the Parliament's Army, under a Colonel, a Friend of his ; and soon after, we find him in the Battle of *Naseby*, where he behaved so gallantly, as to be taken particular Notice of, and advanced to a Captain of Foot.

He had informed his Mother of his Situation in the Army, hoping that would be a sufficient Excuse for his not paying his Duty to her ; begging her not to take his present Engagement amiss, though entered upon without her Participation ; for that he could not possibly withstand the Offer of what was so pleasing to him.

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In the Space of ten Years, *Orestes* was honoured with the Commission of a Colonel ; and about this Time, was sent upon a Commission of another Nature into the North ; when he not only paid a Visit to his Mother, but also to his Uncle. What gave him the greatest Pleasure on the Road was, his Hopes of meeting his dear *Arene* at his Mother's, and also of finding her compliant still to his Wishes ; but never Man met with a more shocking Disappointment to his expected Felicity, than he did ; when upon Enquiry after her, his Mother informed him, that she had left her Family soon after he went, and was very well married, at about fifty Miles more Southward ; for with that News, all his promised Happiness vanished : He stayed but a Month in the North, and then returned Southward to his Regiment.

By this Time, *Eleanora's* Daughter was grown a large Miss ; and that she might not, by being too near to her, create any Suspicion, (for she was immensely fond of the Child) she went over to her Tenant's constantly once a Year to see her, though upon Pretence only, of the Respect she had for her Tenant, whose Daughter, *Cornelia* (for that was the young Lady's Name) passed for.

The Farmer Woman about this Time labouring with an Illness, which in few Days ended



ended her, and making Lamentation before several Neighbours, who were come to see her, of what would become of her Daughter; *Eleanora* (as had been concerted between them) told her publickly, that having no Daughter of her own, if she would suffer *Cornelia* to be at her Disposal, she would provide very handsomely for her as her own Child; desiring her to be comforted, as to what would become of her. Accordingly, that she might receive the most polite Education, in order to qualify her for the Fortune she purposed to bestow on her, she sent her to a Friend's House at *London*, to be placed to Boarding-School there, to acquire all such Accomplishments, as were necessary for Ladies of Birth and Figure in Life, where she stayed for about six Years, and then returned to live with *Eleanora*.

Upon the Restoration, *Orestes* was out of all Employ; but having a very pretty Competency, he was not in over much Hast for going Northward, but spent about three Years more in and about *London*. He had then Thoughts of marrying, and returning to settle in the North; but not readily meeting with a Lady to his Mind, he quitted *London*, and set out for his Mother's.

He had scarce passed his first Compliments upon his Mother, and saluted her, but *Cornelia*

being then present, he also saluted her; at the same Time, thinking her the most beautiful Creature he had ever set his Eyes on; presuming, that she was come in the same Station, which his beloved *Arene* had before occupied in the Family; and upon her quitting the Room, he took occasion to ask his Mother, who she was? She replied, That it was the Daughter of a deceased Friend, for whom she had a great Value; who having nothing else to bequeath at her Death, had intreated her Favour to her Child; that she had been at home with her but a little Time, but that her Behaviour had been so agreeable, and her Temper and Tenderness for her so refined, that she esteemed her even as her own Daughter.

The Regard his Mother shewed her, obliged *Orestes* to pay all becoming Respect, to a Person so much in the Favour of his Parent; and though he had contemplated her Graces, and formed a just Estimate, of their true Worth; yet having his Passions under better Regulation than in the Affair of *Arene*, he could not now suffer them to exorbitate so far, as to attempt her Person.

The constant Society of *Cornelia*, though mostly in the Presence of *Eleanora*, together with the Decency of her Expressions and Behaviour, heightened by the softest Disposition



(beyond Compare) that he had ever met with, in any one Person before ; by Degrees, encroached more and more upon his Affections ; infomuch, that he had scarce enjoyed a full Month of her Conversation, before his Heart was intirely lost, as to every other Relish in Life than of *Cornelia*.

*Orestes*, perceiving that the lovely Image of his *Cornelia* would not quit his Mind, was about to demand his Mother's Consent, for making her his Wife ; but then reflecting, that she had no Fortune, and that as he had very large Expectations at his Mother's Death, it would ill become him, who had been ever looking upwards in Life, and might reasonably be supposed to demand a large Portion in Marriage, to unite himself to one, from whom no Addition could accrue to his Estate ; he would in Return answer, Have not I a fine Income already ? holds not my Mother large Possessions for me in Reversion ? Why then, am I rather carping for Riches, than that inward Peace to my Mind, which *Cornelia* alone can minister ?

Not to act over rashly, in an Affair from which there was no Retraction, he resolved upon an Excursion round part of *Scotland* ; not doubting, but Company, and other Avocations, would dissipate his Passion, and disettle it from

that unequal Object, before it should become too unruly to be reduced.

I have often before now, he would say to himself, beheld new Faces, which have expelled all Thoughts of whatever I had before seen; and the next, and next, in their Turns, have been first in my Esteem, and yet they are all forgotten: So, though *Cornelia* seems now to reign; it can only be till a Rival Beauty expells her from my Heart; which having so often varied its Object, is not now, undoubtedly, arrived to its last Struggle; a little Company, and a fresh Face, will set all to rights again.

*Orestes* set forward, spent a Week at his Uncle's, then proceeded in his Tour, to several of the most remarkable Places in that Country. He purposely engaged in Variety of public Companies, and lost no Opportunity of encountering with the Ladies; but all was flat, all insipid, his Mind and Soul was still with *Cornelia*: Nor could the Ladies Conversation produce other Effects, than to render them the more contemptible in his Eyes, when he placed *Cornelia* in the opposite Scale.

No longer able to endure this preying Viper of Desire in his Breast, he boldly resolved to give himself Ease, by making the shortest Cut of it, back to his Mother's.



Here, this Flame burst out again with redoubled Violence, by the Application of its proper Fuel; and twenty Minds he was in, whether to unveil his Disquiet to *Eleanora*, for her Advice and Consent; or whether to declare his Sentiments first to *Cornelia*. This held a severe Argument, wherein Love, and Duty, struggling long for Victory, by Turns were elevated, by Turns depressed. How shall I withstand the Commands of a fond Parent? Said he, in desisting from all further Prosecution of my Design upon *Cornelia*? when that very Fondness may prove the Motive for her Contradiction? But, can I subsist without *Cornelia*? O! no. I am but too sensible of the Power her Charms have over me; and maugre all *Eleanora*'s Injunctions to the contrary, I am, and must remain her Slave. Then possibly, *Cornelia* may hearken too closely to my Mother's Precepts; and though not from personal Dislike to me, yet in Submission to *Eleanora*'s Will, may reject my Suit, and leave me without Hope or Remedy. Can any State imaginable be more wretched than that?

In fine, *Orestes* concluded, That he should be far less guilty in having committed an Act, which might but possibly be condemned by *Eleanora*; than in effecting the same Thing,

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in exprefs Contradiction to her revealed Will : For which Reason, he took the Opportunity of *Eleanora's* Absence, to breath forth his Passion to *Cornelia* ; but in so soft, so diffident a Manner, as not to overcharge her Virgin Ear with too great a Weight of Love, at the first Onset.

*Cornelia*, (to whom no former Expressions of that Kind had ever, as yet, been offered) could not but receive them with all the imaginable Confusion, that a first Attack of that Nature generally occasions, to an unpractised Innocent. The ruddy Glow, which instantly overshaded her Cheeks, but too plainly indicated the inward Commotion of her Heart ; but still a tacit Smile, that testified a gentle Pleasure in her Breast, gave *Orestes* Hopes, that his Profession was not altogether disagreeable to her. Then pausing a While, he ventured one Step further, by assuring her, that the Sentiments of Honour, which were enjoined to each of his Ideas of her Perfections, urged him to profess, that no less a Blessing, than that of becoming his own for ever, by the Bonds of Wedlock, was the sole Aim of his Ambition : Then intreating her, to construe every future Testimony of his Passion to her, into that View only, he added, that the Pain he suffered, from the Alarm he was but too



fenfible his Difcourse had given to her Innocence, would not permit him then, further to aggravate it by his Prefence; but adjured her, in his Abfence, to weigh his Request, and prepare her felf, to fustain fuch his Petitions, as muft be the neceffary Confequence of each future Interview between them; for that his Life was valuable to him, but in Proportion to the Succels of his Addreffes to her.

*Oreftes* had fcarce quitted the Room, before *Cornelia* retired to her own Chamber; where fhe locked her felf up, to avoid any impertinent Interruption. She was of an Age fufficient for forming juft Reflections on all that *Oreftes* had offered. She repeated to her felf, over and over, every Syllable that had been uttered by him, with the very Manner, and drefsed in the very Sentiments, as nearly as he could interpret them, that each was delivered in. She valued *Oreftes's* Perfon and Accomplifhments according to their true Worth; nor appeared he a Whit lefs amiable in her Eyes, for the Declaration he had juft made to her. She concluded with her felf, however, that nothing was to be faid or done on her Part, till fhe had previously acquainted *Eleanora*, who had been fo gracious a Benefactrefs, and true a Friend to her.

Having

Having come to this Resolution, she resumed her Tranquillity, and was quitting her Chamber, with full Purpose to execute her Resolves; till upon further Reflection, of the Felicity this Amour would settle her in, in case it succeeded, and the Improbability of such Success, in case *Eleanora* should interpose, between *Orestes* his Views, and her Happiness, and divert him from his Purpose: What a miserable Creature, said she, shall I then irremediably continue, for the Remainder of my Life! I shall not only lose him, but the more readily to deprive *Orestes* of my further Conversation, I shall be absolutely cashiered from *Eleanora's* Family; and, perhaps, reduced to a vagabond State.

In such Manner was poor *Cornelia's* Breast agitated, between Love, Hope, and Despair; for the more she considered *Orestes's* his Proposal, the more she admired him, for the disinterested Affection which he bore her; till, at length, she resolved to retain the Affair in the Situation it then was, till she should be better capable of forming a true Judgment, from the Conduct of *Orestes*, what was most likely to prove the Issue of it.

*Orestes* his Impatience suffered him not long to delay the Prosecution of that Suit, whereon he had placed his sole future Happiness; and



that he did, in so warm and affecting a Manner, that *Cornelia* could prefer no Satisfaction to her Condescension to his Desires, upon Condition, that *Eleanora* would give her Consent to it; for that she lay under so many Obligations, she said, to her, that she could no ways pretermitt so necessary a Piece of her Respect, and Duty.

*Orestes*, as I said before, having deliberately weighed the Consequences of such a Step, by his prevailing Motives, encountered no great Difficulty, in preparing *Cornelia's* Mind, for joining in the same Resolution that himself had taken, of secreting their Design from *Eleanora*, lest she should cast a Stumbling-Block in the Way of their conceived Felicity.

Both Parties being now agreed; within the Space of one Month, the Nuptials were consummated, without the least Suspicion of *Eleanora's*; whose first Notice of it was, from *Orestes* entering her Chamber, the Morning after Marriage, with his Bride in his Hand; when they both fell at her Feet, imploring her Blessing, and intreating her Forgiveness to her Son and Daughter, for their presuming to have taken so material a Step in Life, without her previous Advice and Consent; but they assured her, that the preceding Day had made them Man and Wife.

*Orestes*

*Orestes* not affording his Mother Time for a Reply, begged, that the whole Condemnation (should not her Goodness pass over their Omiffion) might solely fall on himself; for, that his Impatience was so vehement, and his Love so predominant, as to over-balance even the Obligations of filial Regard, lest any Bar should, from thence, have arose, to his proposed Enjoyment of *Cornelia*.

He was proceeding, when *Eleanora*, whose Colour, by this Time, had absolutely deserted her Cheeks, with Lips as pale as Death it self, endeavouring to reply, dropped from her Seat upon the Floor. The Eloquence of the Lovers was now changed into confused Cries for Assistance. The whole Family were soon collected round the dispirited Lady, and every prevailing Art, applicable in Cases of a similar Nature, were not only proposed, but put to the Experiment; but all with no Effect; *Eleanora* remained motionless, and, to all Appearance, dead. These Means failing of Success, a Surgeon and Apothecary were called in, and gave the first Hopes, that Life was not yet extinct, from a languid Motion still perceptible in her Pulse.

The new married Couple were inconsolable; no less from the Dread of losing a most indulgent Parent, than from the Cause of it arising,



as they imagined, from a misconducted Action of theirs. *Cornelia*, especially, was at her Wit's End, lest *Orestes* should from thenceforth behold in her, his Mother's Catastrophy; and *Orestes* himself was but little better, at the Damp this Accident had put upon his promised Delight with his dear *Cornelia*.

While these, and other Reflections, were occupying their Imaginations, *Eleanora* having bled pretty freely, was seemingly recovering; but no sooner had her Blood reverted to its interrupted Course, and her Spirits gained Readmission, than her Tongue began to abound with such Speeches, as too apparently were the Product of a distempered Imagination; and still as her Strength was recruited, her Ravings became the more violent: Nor did her flustered Spirits subside with the Return of her Health, but she daily grew more and more impetuous.

The Affliction, that her Condition cast the new married Pair into, in a great Measure im-bittered their Felicity; till Time reducing the Sense they had of her Circumstances by a more accustomed Familiarity, a Person was appointed as a constant Guard over her, in an Apartment that she was obliged to be confined to: But what still added to the Grief of *Orestes* and his Lady was, that they durst  
neither

neither of them approach the Place of her Residence, after several Observations made, that the Sight of them, or even the Sound of their Names, became so terrible to her, as to redouble her Ravings; from whence they could plainly discern, themselves to have been the sole Cause of her Disorder.

*Orestes* and *Cornelia*, little able to bear the perpetual Stings of their own Hearts, so near to the Object which created them; though between themselves, no Couple ever lived in stricter Union and Harmony; having put *Eleanora* into safe Hands, and also entrusted the Management of her Estate to a faithful Steward, retired to *London*, till some Alteration should happen in their Affairs.

At the End of four Years, the Physician, under whose Care *Orestes* had left *Eleanora*, informed him, that his Applications had succeeded so well, as that *Eleanora* was then capable of conducting herself in her Family, and even abroad, under the judicious Eye of her Keeper, who now attended only as a Companion upon her; for that her Ravings had intirely deserted her: But that they were succeeded by a Dejection, that he feared would not be removed, but with the utmost Difficulty. That she spoke but little, and spent many of her wakeful Hours either in silent Tears, or musing;



musing ; but that the Effects of this Disorder grew fainter, the longer it continued.

*Orestes* was extremely pleased at the former Part of this Account ; and purposed, the following Summer, to make a Tour to visit *Eleanora*, in case her Physician should approve of his Design ; and should be of Opinion, that it would not occasion a Relapse into her old Disorder : And accordingly having, some short Time before his projected Journey, wrote to the Doctor for his Advice in the Affair ; his Mother, to whom the Contents of his Letter had been communicated, answered it, with her Assurances, that she was then much better than she had been ; and that nothing would be more pleasing to her, than the Sight of himself and *Cornelia*, whom she was in Hopes, not to enjoy upon a formal Visit only, but to end her Days in their Arms.

How excessive were the Joys of *Orestes* and *Cornelia*, at the Receipt of so sensible a Letter from *Eleanora* ! but more especially, at the affectionate Invitation she gave them. They waited no other Motive than her Request, to put themselves upon the journey ; but, as they had now come to a Resolution of settling with her, and taking their whole Family, consisting of four Children, and as many Servants with them, they were not able to  
be

be moving so soon as they first intended; by Reason of the many Pre-requisites for so great an Undertaking.

It happened, that whilst *Orestes* and his Lady were, by Degrees, forming their Preparations; an intimate Friend of *Orestes*, in a considerable Post in the Government, had offered himself a Candidate, for representing the Town of *Pontefract* in Parliament, upon the Decease of their late Member; and it being certain, that he would meet with great Opposition, he had engaged a considerable Number of his Friends to accompany him thither, in Order to make the better Appearance; and, by their united Endeavours, to promote his Interest to the utmost.

Of this Number *Orestes* was one; nor was any thing going forward, till the Day of Election, but Feasting and Joviality. The Money flew away unaccountably; nor was a single Man of them right sober, during their whole Stay; these Entertainments extending, not only to the Men, but to their Wives, Daughters, and Families.

It chanced to be *Orestes's* Hap, with one or two more of his Companions, while the rest of them were dispersed on like Employment, at other Houses, to be deputed as Superintendants, at a Meeting of some of these

Ladies;



Ladies ; where after several successive Cups, their Blood growing warm, they fell into Country-Dancing. There was a Lady in the Company, whom *Orestes* had from the first Moment of her appearing, beheld with a more than pleasing Satisfaction ; and though he verily thought, that he had on some Occasion, been in her Company before, yet he could by no Means recollect where ; however, he made Choice of her for his Partner in the Dancing.

They had not been long coupled, before *Orestes* his Passions were so excited for his Partner, that he had even determined with himself, if possible, to obtain such Favours from her, as at a less unguarded Hour, he would have scorned to have demanded ; but the Warmth of his Brain, the Agreeableness of the Company, and more especially the Charms of this Lady, promoted first the pressing her Hand, and then proceeding to other Familiarities, till he found an Opportunity, (upon a small Relaxation of the Diversion, to recruit their Breath, and cool themselves, before a Repetition of their Exercise) of disclosing his Inclination to her ; and of urging her to Compliance with it.

*Orestes* was not a little staggered, when the Lady, instead of resenting his Proposal, or accepting

cepting it, (one or other of which he had Room to expect, and was preparing for) with a Smile, calling him by his Name, told him, that having her self been several Years married (though then indeed a Widow) she prized her Virtue at too high a Rate, to sacrifice it for the Gratification of any Man; assuring him, that his Discourse gave her not that Terrour then, as it had heretofore done at ———, (being the Name of his Mother's Seat) desiring him, that if he chose to continue the Dance any longer, he would decline further Application to her; or that she would quit the Company.

*Orestes* was never at such a Plunge in his Life; he could not conceive who it could be, that should so readily know him, and his Mother's Seat; but above all, what Terrour he could have put her into there: Till revolving past Scenes in his Mind, and comparing the Face, the Features, the Voice, and Action of his Lady with those of *Arene*, he soon discovered, that she could be none other, than his *Arene* her self; though Age, and a great Increase of Bulk, had much transformed her, from the desirable Object of his first Passion.

Being now fully resolved in his Mind to know who she was, he began his Attack again with bet-  
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ter Courage; from his having before obtained (as he imagined) the same Favour, of which he now craved only the Repetition; while she, with a Sneer, replied, That she had been in Hopes, the severe Lesson he had received, on the Occasion of his last Attempt upon her, might have restrained his Desires, from so much misplacing themselves, as upon her again.

*Orestes* not being able to penetrate her Meaning, took all she had said for a Matter of Raille-ry only; and thereupon renewed his Suit, more briskly; promising jocosely, that if she would but comply with his Intreaty, he would to a Tittle adhere to such Lessons as had ever been enjoined him, on her Behalf; urging at the same Time, that as she had before consented to his Embraces, in a Virgin State, he was amazed, that she should oppose him as a Widow.

*Arene* replied, That she supposed, the Profusion of Wit he had acquired at the University, had obstructed the Force of his Memory; or he might have better recollected, the Proceedings of the Night before he set out for *Glasgow*; for that he had before solicited her for some Favours, she admitted; and that upon entering her Bed, he might have imagined he should have obtained them; but was surprized,  
he

he could not yet recollect who he met with there in her Stead, and how severely she chastized him, for attempting such an Indecency in her Family; Nay, perhaps, added she, you may have forgotten the solemn Protestations you made to her at that Time, of never offending in such Sort again.

*Orestes*, who all this while took *Arene* for very little less than a Mad-woman, replied, is it possible for you, *Arene*, who condemn the Brevity of my Memory, to have already forgotten our mutual Enjoyment of that happy Night, which hath painted on my Senses such Delight, as will never forsake me, but with my Being it self!

*Arene* told him, she thought he seemed to be at cross Purposes with her; but assured him, that every Word she had said was true; and that but for suspecting him to be then in a Dream, she would have plainly demonstrated it to him: Then turning from him, and intermixing with the rest of the Company, she admitted him to no further Opportunity of discoursing her, for the whole ensuing Evening; and a little before the Company broke up, she slipped out, unperceived by *Orestes*: So that he could neither discover what was her Situation in Life, or where she came from.



Being thus disappointed, in the purposed Enjoyment of his old Friend; *Orestes* determined to find her out the next Day, and pay her a Visit, to gain an Eclaircissement of the mysterious Speeches she had dropped that Evening; but he was no sooner laid in his Bed, than his cool Reasoning afforded him a Representation of that Transaction, in a Light too shocking, even to bear reflecting on.

What can she mean? says he, by my never having lain with her? I lay in her Bed; I was greatly delighted with my Bed-fellow; then who could it be, but her? it can only be a Flam, to preserve her present Credit, and induce me to believe it was some other Person. Then, what can she mean by the Chastisement I met there, from some one in her Stead; and the Protestations I made, of doing so no more? It must be only to amuse me, that she said this; for I am as certain, as that I am now a thinking Being, that I neither met with Chastisement, or offered at the least Protestations on that Occasion, save of my extravagant Love for her Person.

Again, said *Orestes*, I am at a Loss for her Meaning, of some Person in her Stead; who would have dared to have supplied her Place, or at least to have chastized me? but she says,  
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it was for offering at such Indecencies in her Family. — In her Family! Ha! I was in none other than my Mother's! — sure she would not have attempted so barefaced a Lye, had she not suspected it to have been true! for she must be sensible of my Consciousness, whether any one chastised me or not. Then where could this Scene have happened but in Bed? — How! — Surely my Mother was not there in her stead! — Impossible! — true! — She might have rebuked me with Justice? — But I met with no Rebuff. — Whence then are her Surmises? — Sure, there must be some Fire couched under these Embers; there must be some Ground, though perhaps a fallacious one: — But seemed she not surprizingly condescending that Night? How happened she never was so before? — Whence can I reconcile this Conduct? — Her Virtue, before this, at each Attack seemed Proof against every Machination I could devise. — There is no accounting for her last Compliance, when balanced with the prior Resolution. — I was received with eager Arms that Night, though every Subterfuge prevailed before, to disappoint my craving Hopes! — Had she not revealed the Secret to my Mother? who, to avoid the Indignity to her, might substitute some other



in her Place ?——But who then durst chastise !  
 for so she apprehended it to be, that is plain.  
 ——Ha ! —— It was not my Mother ! ——  
 It was not she, herself ! —— It was. —— It  
 could not be ! —— My Mother ? said I. ——  
 No ! —— It was my Mother ! —— She has  
 never seemed to love me better since ; ——  
 yet, why that Shock at seeing me *Cornelia's* !  
 which, in so many Years, she hath not wholly  
 recovered from ! there is some Mystery unfath-  
 omable in this ; but I am resolved to make  
 my self Master of it from *Arene*.

Poor *Orestes*, his Mind was so upon the  
 Rack all Night, that Sleep and he were utter  
 Strangers to each other ; nor had he Hope of  
 Ease, but from *Arene*. He arose with the  
 first Light, and made the strictest Enquiry  
 after her that he possibly could, but with-  
 out Effect, for the whole Morning ; till about  
 Noon, he found out the Lady that had intro-  
 duced his Partner. He tarried not a Moment  
 from pursuing her to her Friend's House,  
 when expecting an End of his Travel ; all the  
 Report that he could procure was, that she  
 went off that Morning in the *York* Coach  
 for *London* ; but where her Residence would  
 be, was undeterminable by her Friend ; for that  
 she arrived at her House, but two Days before  
 from *Berwick*.

*Orestes*

*Orestes* was now ten times more overwhelmed with Despair than before ; his Ideas crowded so fast on his Imagination, that they even stifled all Reflection ; and had not the Election been to come on as the very next Morning, he had certainly taken Post that Night for *London* : But as he could frame no plausible Excuse, for so precipitately deserting of his Friend, he was obliged to stay with him till that was over ; but the Moment his Friend was declared, pretending urgent Business, he mounted Post, in Pursuit of the Coach to *London*.

He arrived there the second Day in the Evening, having rode almost Night and Day, and enquired all the Way after the *York* Stage ; but by some Accident or other, he had missed it ; for he alighted at the Inn before its Arrival ; where, being informed, that it was every Hour expected, he waited its Coming with great Impatience : But alas ! how subject to Frustration are our best concerted Schemes ! for now, he, who but the Moment before the Coach appeared, had framed his very Speech, his Action on her alighting ; nay had fancied himself already handing her out of the Coach, upon its Arrival, received the mortifying Intelligence, that she having little or no Baggage, had

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quitted



quitted the Stage for an Hack ; and that no one knew whither she was gone to.

This Advice so confounded *Orestes*, that he stood like one bewildered in his Senses : To prosecute the Search of a Person, whose Widow Name he was a Stranger to ; and that in so large and populous a City as *London*, was an *Herculean* Labour, that he could by no Means persuade himself to undertake.

Giving over therefore all further Thoughts of *Arene*, he returned to *Cornelia* ; but under such Chagrin, that it was but too visible to her, who was doatingly fond of him, that he had encountered some cross Accident or Disappointment : However, unconscious of its arising from any Act of hers, she endeavoured to advance him to Pleasantry, by enquiring into the Election, and whether his Friend had succeeded ? and from thence, running from one Thing to another, till their Discourse having broken the Thread of his Reflection, he brightened up again, and seemed easy.

Indeed, he only seemed so ; for no sooner could his Thoughts collect into proper Arrangement, for the due Prosecution of the Notions he had entertained, than he was reduced to his darker Apprehensions again : He sighed, was restless, ever moving, though he knew not why ;

nor

nor met he with more continued Quiet in one Place, than another. And now, his Journey to *Scotland* was prosecuted, with so much Expedition, that in three Weeks Time after he arrived at *London*, he attained his Mother's Seat in the North.

Nothing, since *Arene* left him, had been able to exalt his Joys to the Pitch, that the Health of *Eleanora*, and the affectionate Reception, which she gave both himself and *Cornelia*, did; and for some Time, they continued mutual Blessings to each other; but *Orestes* his Impatience would not permit him to linger his Days in Suspence, before he gently touched upon his having danced with *Arene*, and the Occasion of their Meeting. He observed *Eleanora's* Visage to alter very much, at naming her; but as yet, ignorant that any Thing further had passed between them; she attempted to put off the Discourse to somewhat else: though she seemed so confused in her own Mind, that she could scarce speak intelligibly.

This Change in his Mother, created still, more and more Disquiet to *Orestes*; for he was now confirmed in his Opinion, that some dark Scene had been concerted between her and *Arene*, at the Time he imagined he had possessed the latter: So



that notwithstanding the Discontent he had perceived his Mother to labour under, upon the Mention of *Arene*; he resolved, as the Ice was now broken, to prosecute his Enquiry at all Adventures, rather than to have his Work all to begin again; and that perhaps, at a Time when he could not so fairly bring it upon the Carpet, as at present; so that without further Ceremony, he proceeded.

Madam, said he, the Conversation of *Arene* brought to my Mind some past Scenes of my youthful Days; for I must own, I once thought her the most agreeable Woman upon Earth. Pray, did you ever hear of a private Amour I had with her? for we talked that over too, when I saw her.

*Orestes* then casting a Look towards his Mother; her Eyes were fixed in her Head; her Hands fallen to her Sides; and her Body as stiff, and white, as Alabaster. The Suddenness of this Alteration so amazed him, that he had no Ability left, either for helping himself, or her; but was almost under as motionless a Stupefaction, as herself.

During this Insensibility of the Parties, *Cornelia* entered the Chamber; where upon view of this so shocking a Spectacle, she was almost reduced to the same Predicament; but still retaining her Voice, she called out for the Servants;

vants: When *Orestes*, by a Motion of his Hand, forbad their Approach, till he was somewhat better qualified, himself to assist with them; he not being willing to pass under their Observation, in the Condition he then was; but it was not long, before they all united their Endeavours, for restoring *Eleanora* to her Vigour again.

Poor *Eleanora*, alas! never spake more, till her dying Moment: It is true, she was soon able to move her Limbs, and even to walk cross her Room, by Support; but her Tongue would not articulate a Syllable, though she often aimed at it; and on the third Morning, she died.

What were *Orestes* his Doubts, Fears, Jealousies, and Distraction, at the Prospect of *Eleanora*'s never being able to declare, what alone (as he guessed) could settle his Mind in Tranquillity! though happy had he been, had he never known it.

The Torrent of *Orestes*'s Jealousies, which had denied him Rest all Night, hurried him on the Wing, to *Eleanora*'s Chamber in the Morning; and though he dreaded the Consequences, of the Demand he was about to make to her; yet the intolerable Anguish of his Mind, till he should be able to obtain her Resolution of his Difficulty, preponderating to



every other Consideration, he would no longer refrain from questioning her, whether she was privy to his Design upon *Arene*? To which she, poor Woman, though she could make no verbal Reply, yet by the Motion of her Head, testified her Assent, that she was. He then begged her to signify, whether he had been imposed upon in that Affair, by the Substitution of any other Person in her Place? At this Demand, *Eleanora*, lifting up her Eyes for a short Space, and uttering an horrid Groan, signified that it was so.

His Perturbation was then heightened to such Extravagance, that he was almost raving; suspecting, that as his Mother was disabled from Speech, he should by no Means discover the Name of the Impostor; till recollecting himself, Madam, said he, it will be impossible for me to endure long in this Suspence; I can never bear it. O satisfy me of the Person, or I am undone. I will run over the Names of all the Women then in your Family, one by one, and if you have any Pity for me, assent, by an approbatory Nod of your Head, to which of them it was; for my future Peace, nay my Life itself, depends upon the Knowledge of it.

*Orestes* being about nominating them, he began first with her Chamber-maid; Madam, said

said he, was it her? but instead of a Reply, or waiting for any further Request; *Eleanora*, collecting her whole Force into one Arm, struck at *Orestes* with incredible Fury; and by every Sign, and Motion in her Power, commanded him to Silence; then smiting her Breast, as if she meant to have dispatched herself; and again raising her Eyes, and groaning, she sunk upon her Pillow, and wept bitterly.

Not a Sound, or Motion of *Eleanora's*, but pierced the very Soul of *Orestes*, (for he was one of the tenderest Sons living :) not only for the Grief which so afflicted her, but from the Turbulency of his own Spirits, which despaired of Comfort, but from the Explanation she might afford, of what he so anxiously sought after.

*Eleanora* observing, and pitying his Concern, (little doubting, but that it arose from the Declarations *Aene* had made to him, of the Truth of her former Transactions) in Compassion to his Sufferings, made Signs for Pen and Paper; which he no sooner comprehended, than he flew to procure them for her, in Hope of the immediate Attainment of his Desires; he raised her up in her Bed, delivering to her all proper Materials; but she only wrote, that



it was her Request, he would wait upon her the next Morning.

This Notice exceedingly perplexed *Orestes*, who imagined nothing less, than that she would be able to survive, till the Time came; and should she drop intermediately, he would then be left to his present Inquietudes; however, it being her Request, he complied; and withdrawing, sent in her Women to attend her.

*Eleanora*, though she was seemingly very weak, and had not arisen from her Bed since she took it, on the preceding Morning; upon the Approach of her Women, made Signs for rising, and did so, when to their Apprehensions, she seemed much better, and livelier, than they could have expected. She then took some little Refreshment, and being properly seated at the Table, with all Materials for writing before her, she by a little Note, ordered every one to retire, and on no Account whatsoever to re-enter her Apartment, uncalled for; that is, till she should ring a Bell, which was placed before her, for that Purpose.

Her Women promised Obedience; but their real Regard for her Person, had well nigh obliged them to break through her Injunction; for though they waited for two or three Hours with

with reasonable Patience; yet at the Conclusion of four, five, and even six Hours, their Concern grew too violent to be supportable, and they were about presuming to transgress her Commands, lest any fatal Event should have befallen her; but rightly judging, that it would first be incumbent on them, for their own Justification, to advise with *Orestes* in so critical a Point; he having heard their express Orders to the contrary, and lest their unrequired Intrusion, should interrupt the Design he apprehended *Eleanora* had in hand, positively contradicted any Breach of her Orders, and insisted upon their waiting some Time longer for the Signal; and that no one should even then presume to approach her, without previous Notice to him.

It was near the ninth Hour when the Bell rung, and then immediately, having informed *Orestes*, they presented themselves before her, she holding up a Slip of Paper, at the same Time, for them to read. This was Directions, for bringing her a Candle, and her Watch; both which were immediately delivered to her; then having folded up a Pacquet, she inclosed it in a Cover, and sealing it in divers Places, directed it thus.

“ To my Son *Orestes*; upon my Blessing, not  
 “ to be opened, till after I am interred; and  
 “ subject to my every Curse upon his Failure.”

She



She then ordered *Orestes* and *Cornelia* to be called in, seemed much more chearful and easy than she had been, ordered her Supper by Writing, and fed very agreeably with them; keeping them Company for about two Hours longer; within which Time, she took Occasion to deliver the Pacquet to *Orestes*, and to compel him to promise, never to break the Seals, till the Time by her prefixed; all which being compleated to her Satisfaction, she signified to them to retire, and herself went to Bed; two of her Women attending her, during the Remainder of the Night.

She fell into a sound Sleep, even to snooring, for the first two Thirds of the Night; after which, she became more restless; till a little before Day-Light, they were surprized, at hearing her talk very passionately in her Sleep; but though her Lips moved, and the Sounds were plainly articulate; yet they were so broken, and by Starts, that they could not make out the Cause of her Uneasiness from them: At length, after much seeming Conflict with herself; having plainly, audibly, and deliberately, pronounced Farewell *Orestes*; she sunk her Head, stretched out her Limbs, and died immediately.

Tidings of *Eleanora's* Death, found no long Passage to *Orestes's* Ears, while himself and

*Cornelia* were yet in Bed. The Death of a Mother so dear to them both, could not but demand a reasonable Tribute of their Tears; but she was now no more, and they soon, from a Sense of their Inutility, dried them up again.

*Orestes* had scarce recovered from the first Set of Reflections which her Death had introduced; but urged by his Impatience for the Contents of her Pacquet, he arose, and retiring to his Closet, had seized it, and was breaking open the Seal; when her Directions staring him in the Face, his Hand on a sudden became unactive, and his Heart trembling, failed him. He longed for an Insight into its Contents; but durst not attempt it, in Breach of her so positive Injunction, and even Curse, should he act in Contradiction to her Commands.

Never was poor Creature more tost, in the Tempest of contending Passions, than *Orestes*. *Eleanora*, said he, is no more; nor can she, by any possible Means be a Sufferer, let the Contents of this Pacquet be what they will. Can it in the least contribute to her Joy, or Disturbance, now, whether this Paper is opened, or closed? If so, I would submit to a Thousand Deaths, before I would disobey her; but she is already past all Sense of future Joy

or



or Distress, for any Thing that can happen in this World. Then, though it might be pleasing to her while in Life, to imagine she had reserved the Knowledge of this Mystery from me, for such a Space of Time; can it affect her now, (the Stroke of Death having passed upon her) that I attain it, her Corps being above, or beneath a few Feet of Earth? Surely not. She knew not in Life, what Death was; nor can she be now sensible of what I am about to do; for could she, as dead, she would accord to my Impatience, and subscribe her Consent to my Gratification.

He was just snapping the Seal, when casting his Eye on the Supercription again, his Hand stopt, till reading, "Subject to my every Curse upon his Failure." What? said he, shall I, for a few Days Anticipation of my Desires, draw down my Parent's Curse upon my Head, her every Curse? How shall I endure myself, after the Commission of this Fact, so opposite to my Mother's Precepts? By obeying her, I may suffer for a few Days; but by my Disobedience, who knows, but my Conscience may become my Tormenter, to my latest Moment of Life, and stretch me upon a Rack, far more afflictive than the Tortures only of unsatisfied Curiosity; for it really is no more. This may come to a Period, at my own Election;

Election ; but that may end me, and but end, with me.

Upon these Reflections, *Orestes* cast from him the Pacquet, under the Resolution of submitting to the Nescience of its Contents, till the Arrival of that Time, when he might inculpably indulge over them ; and from that Moment, though his Curiosity daily urged him, by new invented Plausibilities to Compliance with it ; yet his Determination (being fixed for the contrary) as often prevailed, till after *Eleanora's* Interment.

It is very far from improbable, that *Eleanora's* Funeral might be somewhat expedited, to give the reader Scope to *Orestes* his Wishes ; for it was but deferred to the fourth Day ; and then performed, in a very becoming Manner, and suitable to her Rank in Life : But no sooner was the Solemnity concluded, than *Orestes*, now disengaged from further Scruples, and Interruption, hastened to uncase his Pacquet.

He had but just cracked the first Seal, and was proceeding to the rest, (there being several of them) when a sudden Start took his Fancy, for deliberating a little e're he advanced any further. What am I about to do? said he. This Case, it is plain, contains within it some Mystery, and that not proper for unfold-



ing in my Mother's Life-time ; nay, in her Judgment, not even while her very Corps was visible on Earth. What then can this be? may it be a whit more profitable for me to peruse it now ? — O ! that I could but find *Arene* ! I would then, but just gain a Glimpse of the Solution of this Mystery, and go no further : For as my Sollicitations only have, by their pressing Energy, extracted the inclosed Account of Things from my Mother, which I had never known, but from the Earnestness of my Importunities ; so it is as plain, that she judged it most for my Interest, that I should have remained in Ignorance still.

O ! that I had never met *Arene* more ! or at least to better Purpose ! what had I to do to attempt her ! could I not (being then under Engagement to *Cornelia*, the sweetest Wife that Man ever enjoyed) have rested satisfied with what I before suspected to be true ! (If yet it was not so) it contented me, as well as if it had been so. Then suppose it was not so ; why shall I aim at perplexing my self with Discoveries, of which, in *Arene's* Absence, I can now never arrive to a Certainty ; for should this Account of my Mother's, (as I suspect it is) be couched under Terms ambiguous, or obscure, I shall then be at a worse Plunge than ever ; nay, may be inextricably mired in such  
De-

Despondence, as I may never emerge from more.

Why then should I indulge this Appetite for Curiosity, that may be attended with such fatal Consequences? for unless I should meet here with an Explication grateful to me, I shall be but the more hampered, for struggling. Let me then cast aside all further Thoughts of this enigmatic Foolery: I may now live happily, what Man more so? a large Estate, an excellent Wife, and Children to my Wish; what have I to do therefore with Arcanas, that can no ways contribute to the Advancement of my Felicity? For at best, it is but being certain who was my Whore, the Night before I left this Place for *Glasgow*. I say, it was *Arene* her self, she says, not. I am certain it was somebody; then what matters who, so I was satisfied. I have no Inclination for further Favours from her, be she who she will. I'll e'en burn the Pacquet, and give my self no more Concern about it.

Had a Fire been at hand, (as great was the Pity there was not) *Orestes* declared to me, (for he made me his sole Confident in every thing) that he should certainly have acted as he had proposed, in the Mood he was then in. However, having tossed it upon a Shelf in his Closet, it lay there neglected for some Months,



and he thought no more of it; but passed his Time in the sweetest Tranquillity with his beloved *Cornelia*; till having worn out his former Uneasiness on that Subject; he one Day, in Search of somewhat else, accidentally laying his Hand upon the Pacquet, took it down. Well! said he, now I will open it; for let it contain what it will, I am now sufficient Master of my Passions, not to be moved with it. It will be but a bare Amusement, now: So without more ado, he forced the Seals; and casting away an outward Cloathing or two, he unfolded a Letter, wrote on a whole Sheet of Paper, Folio wise, very close on all Sides.

What a long Story, said he, has this good Woman taken the Pains to pen down for my Satisfaction, as she thought, no Doubt? when three Lines would have answered the Purpose of all that I wanted.

He then began at the Top, and read a Sort of Direction, in the Words following.

“To my dear Son *Orestes*, the Father of my “Daughter *Cornelia*.”——He stopped here, nor could he refrain from Tears; Poor Woman! said he, what Pains hath she taken, to fill this whole Sheet of Paper with the Overflowings of a distempered Imagination! but what is Man, upon the least Shock given to his Intellects!

telleets! he can hear it is true, and he can see; but he cannot truly apprehend, at least, for any Continuance. She begins sensibly enough. "To my dear Son *Orestes*;" but what a short Step she makes into vague Notions and Inconsistencies. — "Father of my Daughter "*Cornelia*!" there she roams. How easily are these Brains of ours discomposed, by divers Accidents? And then, what becomes of the Man? he is but degraded to the Rank of an inferior Animal; for they have their sensible Impulses, but are (as she now appears to have been) unable to proceed in any regular System of Cogitation. — I presume it is all of a Piece. — It is much better cast aside, than perused. — These Compositions are but an Exposure of the Defects of human Nature, at best: But this Particular, proclaims those of my own Parent. — Hold, I will but just slide my Eye over a single Line or two, to observe what Scheme the poor Woman sets out with. He then reads.

"Judge you, my dearest Son, my *Orestes*,  
 "once my sole Joy, now my sole Confusion,  
 "with what a trembling Hand, and tortured  
 "Soul, thy miserable Mother must sit down,  
 "to disclose the Foulness of her Crimes, to  
 "the Offspring of her own Bowels; himself,  
 "though innocent, an Actor in the most abo-



“ minable Sin of Incest. Incest in me, my Son,  
 “ while thou art (though not free from For-  
 “ nication) involuntarily involved in that bestial  
 “ Mixture.”

*Orestes* was so agast at what he had read, that the Concussion of all his Faculties prevented his proceeding, for some Time.——How! said he, what! this must be some Strain of her distracted Fancy! or how can it be accounted for? —— But the Language is just. The Sketch I have perused is coherent in itself, if not advanced upon wrong Premises.—— I must proceed.

“ The Issue of it, one Daughter, your present Wife *Cornelia*.”

Hell and Furies! cried *Orestes*. —— My Wife *Cornelia*, my own Daughter, and that by my own Mother too! O! that she was now living! that I might charge her downright with this Falsity! O! I would interrogate her Article by Article, and by her Responses, from a Judgment of her Veracity, and the Rectitude of her Mind for Delivery of this! —— What have I done! —— my over Caution never to disobey her, has fixed such an irremediable Difficulty on my Soul, as can never be dislodged to my latest Hour.——What am I to imagine from this Writing! —— was she sensible, when she wrote it, I am too black a Wretch, to find a

Name amongst the human Species. — Was she not, all my Disquiet vanishes into a Delusion. — Is there no Means left to attain the Truth of this! — Her Women left her better than she had been, when she first undertook this Relation; they found her better still at the Conclusion of it; nay, my self can testify her Sensibility, by supping with her, and receiving this Letter from her, when she extracted my solemn Promise, not to pry into this, till after her Interment. Could any Thing favour more of Understanding, than the cautionary Means she took, that subsequent to my Knowledge of these Facts, I should have no Opportunity of offering that Indignity to her Corps, which she might reasonably judge would prove the Result of my Indignation, for so transcendent a Complication of Iniquity!

What else could *Arene's* Hints direct me to, than what this Writing hath confirmed to me! No, it is plain; I have no present Doubt, but it was my Mother herself whom I engaged, in the Room of *Arene*; and granting that, each other Consequence proceeds naturally enough. O cursed Imposition! — O let me tear from my Head these Eyes, that first transmitted to my Heart, a dishonourable Passion for *Arene*! for her, from whom arose the first Inlet to my Woes! But let me see; — durst I venture



further! — Yes, undauntedly ; — for should every Syllable that I can still discover, be literally true, it can but prove a Trifle all, to what I have already heard ; but I may meet with some Reverse of this sad Tale, some Circumstances in Mitigation of the past Relation. — I'll proceed.

“ Horrid Intercourse! between us, O my  
 “ Son! I thought my Force sufficient, to have  
 “ put an absolute Check to your further Im-  
 “ portunities, for dishonouring *Arene*, by  
 “ submitting to her Place; that I might have  
 “ schooled you into a true Sense of your Duty,  
 “ both to your Maker, and his Creatures, and  
 “ have tempered the Edge of your burning  
 “ Appetite, by my seasonable Admonitions,  
 “ or my Chastisements. — For, what? thinks  
 “ I, can have such Influence upon *Orestes*’s  
 “ gentle Disposition, as a Mother’s Argu-  
 “ ments, at the very Point of violating the  
 “ Laws of Heaven and Earth? Nor would  
 “ any other Method, I am persuaded, have  
 “ created so essential a Reformation, both of  
 “ your Judgment, and Actions, as what I  
 “ had proposed, could I but have acted up to  
 “ the true Spirit of my first formed Intention :  
 “ But what is Man ! what Womankind ! even  
 “ the best of us ! I proceeded, secure in my  
 “ own Strength ; that failed me. Had I in-  
 voked

“ voked superior Aid, I might have persever-  
 “ ed, and have come off Conqueror; but  
 “ thy Raptures were so impetuous, thy Em-  
 “ brace so sudden, so prevailing; no Eye (but  
 “ that of Heaven, then unbeheld by me) to  
 “ discover my Foulness; that I tamely sub-  
 “ mitted to the Impression of thy Image  
 “ upon me.

“ O curse *Eleanora* for this Crime! but  
 “ blame not thy self, in equal Degree with  
 “ thy Mother; nor had you ever obtained the  
 “ Knowledge of this from me, but lest *Arene*,  
 “ from whom I perceive you have gained some  
 “ Information, should not have revealed to  
 “ you, the real View of my meeting you in  
 “ her Bed; but since I have laid my Shame  
 “ before you, at a Time when I am so far  
 “ removed from your Sight, that even the  
 “ Blushes of my Corps may be concealed from  
 “ your Eye; I must, though dead, speak  
 “ further to the Discharge of my Conscience,  
 “ by assuring you, that the unhappy *Cornelia*,  
 “ is the Daughter of us both. O! had you  
 “ but (as in Duty you ought) informed me of  
 “ your Love for her, and sought to my Con-  
 “ sent for uniting with her, all further Stain,  
 “ on both your Memories, and my own,  
 “ might have been prevented! And this, I  
 “ doubt not, (but from other Motives) you  
 “ both



“ both apprehending, have plunged yourselves  
 “ into that Distress, so justly due to you both,  
 “ for your Disregard to my Approbation:  
 “ But being determined to atone, as far as in  
 “ my Power lies, while Life remains, by Con-  
 “ fession and Contrition; I shall now proceed  
 “ to inform you of her Birth, and Education,  
 “ till she became your Wife, if I shall be en-  
 “ abled to sustain my Torments for such a  
 “ Space, as will be necessary to perform it in;  
 “ and then, welcome Death! which can  
 “ alone release me, from the intolerable Post  
 “ I sustain here, and fix me at least, beyond  
 “ the Reach of ever stumbling on the like  
 “ Predicament.”

Poor *Orestes* was so struck with the Repre-  
 sentation of these Things, to his Senses; that  
 he was even too much deprest to complain. He  
 could possibly apply no Remedy to what was  
 already past, and of which there was no Re-  
 cal; but then, to think of supporting Life,  
 (which from his Age and Constitution, in  
 Course of Nature, might still be of many Years  
 Duration) under the Pressure he then laboured  
 with; was so irksome to his Imagination, that he  
 was just stepping for his Sword, to dispatch him-  
 self with, when *Cornelia*, wholly ignorant of  
 all that had happened, entered the Room, in

all the fond Appearance of the most tender Wife breathing.

*Orestes* would fain (had it been possible) have concealed his Confusion from her; but the very Sight of her, as yet wholly innocent, (in her own Conceit) of having ever contributed to any Thing that she could charge upon herself as a Crime; and his Reflections, on the miserable Change that her approaching Distress must introduce her to, cast him into such a Flux of Tears, as no Art of *Cornelia* could relieve him from; till Nature declining longer to supply their Source, he gained just Ability, for a few Words at a Time.

O *Cornelia*, said he, now mine no more. What means my Love? said *Cornelia*. More than I dare express, added he. Let me bear a Portion of your Griefs, said she. Thou'lt too soon, continued he, have thy Share of them too, *Cornelia*. O unhappy Wretch that I am, who in Fondness for thee, have for Years been treasuring up an abundant Portion of Misfortune for thee. Let me intreat my dear Husband, added she, to reveal to me his Woes. Husband no more, said he. Why raves my Dear so? demanded *Cornelia*. O *Cornelia*, answered he, were all the fictitious Furies, in Reality employing their utmost Severities, and by every tormenting Instrument, now lashing  
and



and lacerating my naked Soul; my Condition would be, as soft Repose upon the most fragrant Couch of Roses, compared to the Goads, and Stings, which are now in Exercise on my Vitals. What! must I part with thee, for ever, my *Cornelia*? Have all the Endearments that have past between us, been but the generating of Vipers? And are our Progeny to become as detestable?

My Dear, my Love, my *Orestes*, by all the sacred Ties of Nature, and Affection; for your once dear Wife's, for your Children's Sakes, said *Cornelia*, unravel to me the Cause of your Sorrows. My Wife! say'st thou, replied *Orestes*. I have a Daughter *Cornelia*; but no Wife. I have Bastards, spurious, misbegotten Issue, but no Children. For Heaven Sake, replied she, *Orestes*, detain me on the Rack no longer. What mean you? What have I done? have you no Wife, say you? Alas! why then lives the wretched *Cornelia*! the World's too mean for thee, without *Orestes*.

I know not what thou art, or what thou hast done, replied *Orestes*; nor well know I, what I have done, or what I am; but if *Eleonora* is to be credited, cast thine Eye on that, and tell me if thou canst, if any Name can comprehend what thy self and I are.

He

He then pointing to his Mother's Letter, which lay open upon the Table, *Cornelia* hastily snatching it up, perused it. *Orestes* watched her every Motion, during her reading it; but she had not proceeded far in it, before reddening prodigiously, then turning pale as Ashes, and trembling violently, her Breath grew shorter and shorter; till *Orestes* catching her in his Arms, prevented her Fall upon the Floor. He led her to a Chair, where she had sat but few Minutes labouring for Breath, by now and then a Gulp of it only, before a Suffocation in her Throat intirely prevented all further Respiration.

*Orestes* stood unmoved at her Exit; his Breast being incapable of the Receipt of the least additional Sorrow: But he mused not long, e're he proceeded to Action: For beholding the Body with some Emotion; O lovely *Cornelia*! said he, thou innocent, incestuous Woman! how happily art thou discharged from this surrounding Misery! why may not I too, seek the Peace which thou enjoyest? Witness Heaven! and Earth! I have till too late been ignorant of my Mother's Crimes, which as to my self, have been attended with the blackest Circumstances; but yet innocently, as to the grand Offence. O my Children! my Children!—— But this Evidence of *Eleanora's*, (says he, taking



ing up the Letter) shall not be left behind to their Prejudice. Then snatching his Sword from an Hook whereon it hung, he first swallowed the Letter by Pieces, and then stabbed himself, falling close at the Feet of *Cornelia*.

It was not many Hours, before both the whole Family, and all the Neighbourhood, were prodigiously alarmed at this Catastrophe, of the most loving Pair, esteemed, that ever lived: But the whole Affair, having been transacted without the Privy of any Person living, but my self, who was the unhappy Witness of their tragical End; upon comparing the Conditions they were found in, by the nicest Rules of Reason, I soon passed it currently in the World, that *Cornelia* having died in her Chair suddenly (as indeed she did) *Orestes*, unable to survive her, had stabbed himself; and this is the current Report, at this Day.

**F I N I S.**



